

Brushy Creek Trail Advisory Board, Special Meeting
1/2/07 6:00pm

Attending: Mike Tinkham, Ruth Nelleson, Pat Reed, Myron Groat, Norm Mundie, Mike O'Brien, Steve Bell, Greg Van Fosson, Donna Christensen, Linda Jenny, Deb Lewis, John Pearson, Chad Kelchen, and Kevin Szcodronski.

The meeting was called to order at 6:15pm. Kevin Szcodronski started the meeting with introductions of board members and guests. He then asked Chad Kelchen to give a quick overview of the situation and the proposed changes to the trail to remedy the problem.

Chad used a large map to describe the area and the problem. The stream in the preserve is cutting a bank within 6 feet of the state preserve trail. Left unattended the creek will eventually take the bank and the trail. About 3-6 feet of the trail was taken by flash flooding this spring. The current rate of loss is small at this time, but large unpredictable events could jeopardize the trail.

After consulting with Richard Wilson, Engineer with the DNR, Chad proposed taking the material from the far bank of the creek and pushing it up against the near bank. In addition, the bank would be armored with field stone and wing dam placed upstream.

Before repairing the trail Chad contacted John Pearson to get approval to repair the bank. After hearing the repair option, John recommended involving the Preserves Board in this process. John coordinated a tour for the board to go out and view the area. John stated that no decision had been made at this point and the board will discuss this at their next meeting Jan 5th. John also pointed out that although this bank is eroding, it is at a slow rate and this is not an emergency repair. In a worst case scenario the trail could be moved until repairs could be made. He also recommended that staff seek less intrusive ideas for trail repair. Lastly, John pointed out that we are fighting Mother Nature by trying to place a permanent trail on a changing landscape. Any trail repairs staff make will eventually be taken apart by the force of water.

Kevin then pointed out that the purpose of the preserve board is to keep areas identified as preserves as natural as possible and to prevent the interference of man. Therefore any repair made will be against the preserve board's mission. Parks staff will need to balance the needs of both boards in the decision of how to handle this problem. First, a decision must be made as to how permanent of a fix should be made (versus how much intrusion will be made to make the repair). Kevin also stated that the trail advisory board and the state preserve board will make recommendations to DNR staff, but DNR staff is not required to follow them.

Trail advisory board members recommended repair of the trail and pointed out that the trail is an important asset to the park. They stated that large groups of users use that trail and that closure should not be considered as an option.

Norm Mundie asked about the watershed that feeds the creek causing the erosion. With the understanding that the current state of erosion is slow, he assumed the larger flood events were causing the rapid deterioration of the bank. Norm asked if other things could be done upstream to help slow the large amounts of water in flood events. Greg pointed out that there are some structures already in places and that the NRCS has been working with local land owners on water quality issues, but is meeting mixed success.

Discussion then shifted to the code of Iowa that insures the use of the state preserve trail. Kevin read the code as follows:

455A.8A Brushy creek area - trail improvements.

The department, in cooperation with the Brushy creek recreation trails advisory board, shall provide for trail improvements in the recreation area and the state preserve adjoining the recreation area. The department shall establish and maintain a system of trails in the recreation area and the preserve. The trails shall be established or maintained to ensure the minimum possible disturbance to the natural terrain and the natural growth of vegetation, including but not limited to trees. The system of trails shall include equestrian and pedestrian trails.

The department in conjunction with the board shall provide for the location, type, and distance of trails, consistent with this section. The pedestrian trails shall be located in view of scenic attractions, including the lake and the valley. The trails shall be established and maintained in areas where hunting is permitted. The department and the board shall plan for the development of the lake shore.

The northern and southern part of the area shall be connected by trails. The northern part of the area shall include an equestrian campground which shall be maintained by the department. Trails shall exist on the eastern and western sides of the lake. An equestrian trail shall extend across the dam. There shall be established convenient road crossings. The southern part of the area shall include an area designed to securely confine horses. The southern part of the area shall also include pedestrian trails. The department shall post signs on the trails, the campground, and at the confinement area.

93 Acts, ch 176, §42

Chad Kelchen asked Mike O'Brien if the east portion of the preserve trail is left open could the west portion be closed, would this be under the terms of the code? Mike stated that this would go against the intent of the code.

Discussion then continued about various ideas for trail repair. Kevin S then invited all the Trail Advisory Board members to the Preserves board meeting on January 5th, 10am in the 4th floor conference room at the Wallace Building.

Meeting adjourned at 7:15pm.



Distance from trail to cut bank- where I am standing is under cut.



Amber and Erin are on the trail edge.



Proposed fix move silt material from left against bank.



This photo also shows the silt on the right.



Another option is to keep moving the trail to the left. This is only possible from the basswood tree on the left down the trail. Moving the trail any further up the slope will cause severe erosion problems.